

Let there be no mistake: this is the President's war, and the President must be held accountable for its military and diplomatic failures. With this vote, we are demanding that the President meet his obligations to our men and our women and to our Nation.

With this vote, we are fulfilling our promise to the American people that we set a new direction in Iraq.

And, with this vote we are putting forward the leadership needed to bring the war in Iraq to a responsible conclusion and bring our troops home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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SUPPORTING THE IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, the stay-the-course strategy in Iraq has failed. The war in Iraq is entering its fifth year, longer than U.S. involvement in World War I and World War II. It is time to stop the open-ended commitment there. It is time for the Government of Iraq to take responsibility for their own security. It is time to start the process of bringing our troops home. It is time to refocus our military efforts to combat terrorism. It is time to send a clear message that Congress will no longer provide a blank check to fund this war. It is time to pass the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act.

Supporting this bill supports the troops before, during, and after they are deployed. This bill enforces the Department of Defense's current standards for military readiness and provides \$2.5 billion in additional funding to ensure that our troops are properly equipped and trained; it provides \$1.7 billion in additional funding for health care for our troops, and another \$1.7 billion to ensure our veterans receive the care they need and that they deserve. We must support our troops in the theater and when they come home.

This bill is tough on terrorism, tougher than the President's current plan that pays little attention to the war in Afghanistan. It adds \$1 billion to the Department of Defense efforts there. We have lost our focus in the war on terror. We must redirect our military efforts on thwarting terrorism in Afghanistan and eliminating al Qaeda. This bill does that.

The current strategy has not worked largely because the Iraqi leadership has no real motivation to make it work. This bill holds both the President and the Iraqi Government accountable by

ensuring that real progress is made. It is time to turn over the control of Iraq to their people.

Our troops have done their part, and they have done it magnificently. The American people have done their part as well by giving us their sons and daughters who ousted Saddam Hussein. With the cost of this war approaching one-half trillion dollars, it is time for the people of Iraq to spend their dollars, supply their troops, and setting their differences. The destiny of Iraq is now in Iraqi hands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KING of Iowa addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORTING THE IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will vote on legislation to set a path for the responsible redeployment of American troops from Iraq. I will support this bill because it will end American involvement in the Iraqi civil war and bring our troops safely home.

This week marks the fourth anniversary of a war born in deceit and prolonged by mismanagement. I voted against the invasion in 2002; I will vote now to end this war by supporting the Iraq Accountability Act with its benchmarks and timetables for redeploying U.S. forces from Iraq.

For 4 years, previous Congresses neglected their oversight responsibilities while the administration made mistake after mistake. The congressional majority failed to conduct thorough investigations, demand accountability, or offer policy alternatives. We have paid a steep price for that neglect, including the lives of more than 3,200 American Armed Forces, with another 24,000 wounded, many critically.

The new Congress is providing long overdue leadership, taking action to

end U.S. involvement in a civil war with no end in sight. Responsible military disengagement from Iraq is in the national security interests of the United States. There are no easy, cost-free options. But our perpetual presence in Iraq has sapped our military strength, undermined our credibility around the world, and limited our investments in domestic priorities like health care and education.

This week, the House of Representatives has a choice: Either endorse the President's open-ended commitment, or adopt a plan that demands accountability, sets a timeline for redeployment, and restores the readiness of our Armed Forces.

The President's strategy of indefinite intervention is simply not sustainable. The situation in Iraq has moved beyond our military's ability to shape events in a positive direction. Extending our presence merely delays our ability to recover the ground we have lost, our diplomatic initiative, our global reputation, and the broken state of our ground forces.

The Iraq Accountability Act has three key components:

First, it uses President Bush's own benchmarks to require the Iraqis to assume responsibility for their own security. If they meet those benchmarks, all American forces would leave Iraq by the summer of 2008. If they do not, American forces will leave as early as the end of this year.

Second, the bill supports our Armed Forces by requiring the President to certify that any troops deployed to Iraq are fully and properly equipped, and that their deployment follows Department of Defense standards for readiness and rest between deployments.

Third, it provides funds needed to ensure that returning troops and veterans receive the best possible health care and other services they deserve.

The American people expect us to say where we stand on the war in Iraq. By supporting the Iraq Accountability Act we are voting to use the long-neglected powers of Congress to bring U.S. involvement in the Iraqi civil war to an end. I urge, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Iraq Accountability Act when it comes to the floor tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)